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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0203
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: Health Minister to Attend October 25-26 IPAPI Meeting in Egypt and AI Update

REF: A. State 92335

¶B. Amman 159

¶C. Amman 69

¶D. 07 Amman 5012

¶E. 07 Amman 1276

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¶11. (SBU) Jordan's Minister of Health, Salah Mawajdeh, is expected to attend the October 25-26 international conference on avian and pandemic influenza hosted by Egypt (Ref A). Assistant Secretary General for Primary Health Care Dr. Adel Belbeisi told ESTHOFF that while the details of the Jordanian delegation have yet to be finalized, the Minister's office is planning for his participation.

¶12. (SBU) Jordan has not reported any new cases of avian influenza (AI) since March 2006. Jordan currently has Tamiflu stockpiles for 300,000 people. Belbeisi reported the 2009 budget allocated two million dinars (\$2.8 million) for bolstering pandemic flu preparedness through stockpiling Tamiflu, purchasing additional personal protective equipment, and training technical staff. While Belbeisi shared concerns about a human pandemic, he was not overtly concerned about the human health implications of AI, noting, "it won't affect the health of the country as much as the economy."

¶13. (U) Jordan has continued to participate in regional preparedness exercises through the Middle East Consortium of Infectious Diseases (MECID). The first table-top exercise for pandemic flu was held in January 2008 (ref B). Belbeisi recently participated in a September 1-4, MECID organized regional table top exercise in Istanbul for 24 Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli health officials. The table-top scenario involved a pandemic in Egypt spreading to Jericho, Jerusalem, and Amman and covered topics related to border movements, communications, and sharing of medical equipment. Additional regional tabletop exercises are likely to be scheduled in 2008.

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